



Times photo — ROBERT ROGERS

HE'S GOT THE LOOK: Chris Robles poses for the camera outside his Spring Hill home.

Spring Hill child takes his cues

■ He has been on book covers, advertising layouts, fashion runways and television shows. He is 8 years old.

By PHYLLIS LIPINSKI
Times Correspondent

SPRING HILL — Christian Robles has high ambitions for himself. When the 8-year-old grows up, he would like to be an actor, an architect and a piano teacher.

He has achieved one of his goals.

Robles recently completed taping five shows of *Sing Me A Song: With Belle*, a new children's television program produced by Lake Buena Vista Television at Walt Disney World.

"I really liked it a lot," Chris said. "It was fun, and I made new friends." *Belle* was really nice, too.

The half-hour program will air early on Saturday mornings on WTOG-Ch. 44 beginning Sept. 9. The time has not been determined, but it probably will be about 7:30 or 8:30 a.m.

"Each child made about eight shows, but Chris only got to make five of them since he started late," said his mother, Magda Robles.

Chris was not part of the original cast of one adult actor and 10 children (with four backups), which began production of about 20 episodes June 27. But after two cast members left, he auditioned for one of the spots July 13 when his agent, Suzanne Haley of Orlando, notified the Robles of the opportunity. He was called back for another audition July 16 and began rehearsals July 24 in the MGM Studios at Disney World. Robles vied for the part against hundreds of other hopeful child actors, including the backups.

"I was at summer camp when my daddy came and told me the good news," Chris said. "He took us to Dairy Queen to celebrate."

Although the casting director, Pati Thomas-Robinson, said she interviewed more than 500 children throughout Florida for the show, she knew she wanted Chris the minute she met him.

"We were looking for a dark-haired child," Thomas-Robinson said, "because Disney said they had too many with blond hair and blue eyes. Chris is an extremely attractive child. He's got these gorgeous dark eyes and long lashes. He's exotic looking."

Besides children's appearances, Thomas-Robinson said she and the show's producer, Patrick Davidson, based their cast choices on personalities and the kids' ability to read well.

"They need to be outgoing and keep smiling," she said. "That is really hard for a kid that age. It's demanding. Also, this is the first time Disney has hired all locally. These are all local children from Florida in this production. The only one who isn't local is Belle, who is played by Lynsey McLeod from California."

Thomas-Robinson, who is originally from St. Petersburg, said she wants to see local actors succeed.

"There is a lot of talent right here, and I'm glad some of the young ones are getting the chance



COVER BOY: Chris Robles was the model for the trapped child on this book, *Earthquake!*

with this show," she said.

Although the producers remain silent on the final product of the programs, Thomas-Robinson said it included Belle, the main character of the Disney animated film, *Beauty and the Beast*, who invites five children into her book and music shop to listen to stories that teach moral lessons. Characters include puppets; "Big Book," who has a bad attitude; and two bookworms. Most children have 10 to 30 lines, asking questions and talking to the characters.

"Animation is being added to (the shows) back in California," Thomas-Robinson said. "This show is different from other programs for children. There is no lip-synching and no purple dinosaur."

Mrs. Robles said directors, the acting coach and others on the set approached her to praise Chris.

"They all told me he was so polite and well-behaved," she said. "His acting coach said he was smart and follows instructions well."

If all goes well with the show, the Los Angeles-based producers plan to film 65 more episodes beginning in January. Thomas-Robinson said Chris likely will be asked to come back.

The young actor got his first taste at performing two years ago when his parents entered him in a beauty pageant at Gulf View Square in Port Richey. He captured five trophies: for prettiest eyes, prettiest smile, best dressed, personality plus and overall beauty.

"I was a little nervous doing the pageant, but I really liked that all the people were looking at me," Chris said, his eyes beaming as he flashed his winning smile. "That's when I knew I wanted to be an actor. I even hope to do a movie some day."

Since the pageant, Chris has modeled for magazines, brochures, advertisements and other publications. His portfolio includes copies of ads for Beall's Department Store, several publications of School Book Fair, the cover of a book, *Earthquake!*, written by Alida E. Young, and a spot in a Downy TV commercial titled "Tender-

"They have Chris coming out of the bathtub, and the mother dries him with a towel washed in Downy. Then he kisses her on the cheek," his mother said.

He also did a brochure for GTE Mobilnet with his sister, Bianca, 6. Like her brother, Bianca has done some modeling and even had a part in a commercial with Barney, the purple dinosaur.

While Bianca likes to sing and dance, her brother focuses more on acting and playing the piano, a talent he picked up earlier this year.

"Chris wanted to learn how to play the piano while he was taking the children's workshop offered by Stage West (Community Playhouse in Spring Hill)," Mrs. Robles said. "Actually, I credit Stage West for him getting this spot. Chris used to be really shy and never had a speaking part before. He learned so much with (the Stage West workshop)."

The community theater offered its first children's workshop last year, teaching children between ages 7 and 13 all aspects of the theater, from acting to dance to music.

Robles, a lawyer who works with her husband, Rafael, in their law firm, Robles & Robles in Spring Hill, said Hernando County has little to offer children interested in the arts.

"We need these types of programs for the kids here," she said. "If Stage West didn't have it, you would have to take your children to Tampa or Orlando, and most people can't do that."

Chris said he loves to play the piano and hopes to teach it one day, with his first students being his mother, father and sister.

His favorite episode on *Sing Me A Story* is titled "Not Giving Up and Do Your Best," where he gets to play *Submarine* on a piano for Belle, the other children and various characters on the show.

"We like to integrate the children's special skills into the show," Thomas-Robinson said. "Maybe on a future episode Chris will be able to speak in Spanish or French," two of the languages he speaks in addition to English.

The only part Chris said he didn't like about his experience was that he missed his sister and father during the two weeks of taping.

"We had to celebrate my sister's birthday two days early because we had to leave to do the show," he said. "I missed them a lot. That's the only thing I didn't like."

Since production has ended, Chris has been looking forward to starting fourth grade at Wider Horizons School in Spring Hill. He is eager to tell his friends about the show.

"I hope they watch it," he said, "and I hope they enjoy it."

Based on his own experience, Chris said he wanted to give a message to other kids who want to reach their goals:

"Stay out of trouble, always do your best and never give up," he said.

FUNERAL NOTICES

GALASSO — Anna M., 79, a machine operator in the dress industry. Mass will be held at 10:30 a.m., Monday, August 14, 1995 at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, with Father Henry Riffle, conducting the services. Burial will be in Fero Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Beverly Hills, FL, under the direction of Fero Funeral Home with Crematory, 5955 North Lecanto Hwy., Beverly Hills, FL. Visitation will be held Sunday, August 13, 1995 from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m., with a prayer service to be held on Sunday, Aug. 13, 1995 at 6:30 p.m. **FERO FUNERAL HOME BEVERLY HILLS**

SUNCOAST DEATHS

This list is extracted from detailed obituaries published in other regional editions of the Times.

Hillsborough

CRUZ, ALICEA, 105, of Tampa, died Aug. 11. A.P. Boza Town 'N Country Chapel, Tampa.
DIEGUEZ, NATALIA, 88, of Tampa, died Aug. 11. Roel and Curry Funeral Home, Tampa.
KRUGER, KERMIT R. "BOB" JR., 64, of Tampa, died Aug. 11. F.T. Blount Co. Funeral Home, Lutz.
SINARDI, LUCY R., 94, of Tampa, died Aug. 12. Roel and Curry Funeral Home, Tampa.
WEBB, MARION DOUGLAS, 71, of Seffner, died Aug. 9. Stowers Funeral Homes, Brandon.

Pasco

BRADEN, MICHELE, 31, of Beacon Woods East, died Aug. 11. Prevatt Funeral Home, Bayonet Point/Hudson.
DAVID, CHARLES E., 92, of New Port Richey, died Aug. 11. Morgan Funeral Home, New Port Richey.
FLANAGAN, BERNARD J., 91, of New Port Richey, died Aug. 10. Bell Funeral Home, Bayonet Point.
HEINBOCKEL, JOHANNA, 90, of Holiday, died Aug. 12. Faupel Funeral Home, Port Richey.
HOWE, MILTON A., 55, of New Port Richey, died Aug. 11. North/Meadowlawn, New Port Richey.
KENNEDY, MIRIAM R., 86, of New Port Richey, died Aug. 11. Michels-Lundquist Funeral Home, New Port Richey.

North Pinellas

ADAMO, PAULINE, 76, of Largo, died Aug. 11. Lewis W. Mohn Funeral Home, Seminole.
ALBERT, RICHARD M., 59, of Safety Harbor, died Aug. 9. Bayside Funeral Home/Sylvan Abbey Memorial Park, Clearwater.
BROWARD, CAROLYN, 48, of Palm harbor, died Aug. 10. Abbey Parklawn Funeral Home, Palm Harbor.
DATTILO, JOHN EDWARD, 43, of Palm Harbor, died Aug. 8. Abbey Parklawn Funeral Home, Palm Harbor.
FORKER, EDWARD J., 44, of Palm Harbor, died Aug. 10. Abbey Parklawn Funeral Home, Palm Harbor.
GANGELHOFF, MICHAEL

DELBERT, 26, of Clearwater, died Aug. 10. Cass Lake Thomas-Dennis Funeral Home, Cass Lake, Minn.
GOODALE, ELIZABETH ANN, 54, of Largo, died Aug. 8. National Cremation Society, Largo.
GUNTHER, DIANE, 52, of Clearwater, died Aug. 10. Moss-Feaster Funeral Homes, Serenity Gardens Chapel, Largo.
HAYES, JULIA R., 83, of Palm Harbor, formerly of Dunedin, died Aug. 10. Moss-Feaster Funeral Homes, Dunedin Chapel.
KARAKOS, COSTAS G. "PUFF RICE", 73, of Tarpon Springs, died Aug. 11. Vinson Funeral Home, Tarpon Springs.
MANLY, VIOLA F., 80, of Largo, died Aug. 3. American Burial and Cremation, Palm Harbor.
POWELL, RICHARD J., 79, of Largo, died Aug. 11. Moss-Feaster Funeral Homes, Largo Chapel.
RONNE, SVEN HENRY, 76, of Clearwater, died Aug. 11. Rhodes Funeral Directors, Druid Chapel, Clearwater.
SCANNELL, CHARLES J. SR., 78, of Palm Harbor, died Aug. 10. Egan Funeral Home, Chicago.

South Pinellas

ALDRICH, IVY C., 63, of St. Petersburg, died Aug. 10. National Cremation Society, Largo.
ANFUSO, ANTHONY JOSEPH, 33, of St. Petersburg, died Aug. 12. Southern Funeral & Memorial Services, St. Petersburg.
CARR, FLORA M., 70, of Sunbury, Pa., and formerly of St. Petersburg, died Aug. 10. David T. Zweier Funeral Home, Sunbury, Pa.
ELLIOTT, MAX W., 78, of St. Petersburg, died Aug. 11. Memorial Park Funeral Home-Cemetery, St. Petersburg.
EMRICK, WILLIAM R. "BILL", 70, of St. Petersburg, died Aug. 8. American Burial & Cremation Service, Palm Harbor.
GULICK, EDWARD F., of St. Petersburg, died Aug. 11. John S. Rhodes, East Chapel, St. Petersburg.
MacCONNELL, ARTHUR SMALL, 82, of Largo, and formerly of St. Petersburg, died Aug. 9. Hubbell Funeral Home and Crematory, Belleair Bluffs.
MORGAN, RAY E., 67, of Pinellas Park, died Aug. 6. American Burial & Cremation Service, Palm Harbor.
WATERS, GEORGE DOUGLAS SR., 64, of St. Petersburg, died Aug. 10. Creal Funeral Home, St. Petersburg.

OBITUARIES

CELLER, HAROLD, 85, of Inverness, died Friday (Aug. 11, 1995) at Heritage Health and Rehabilitation Center. Born in New York City, he came here 18 years ago from Syosset, N.Y., and was retired from the Stock Exchange. He was a member of the Beverly Hills Civic Association and a Protestant. Survivors include a daughter, Frances Celler, Beverly Hills; a nephew; and two nieces. Fero Funeral Home, Beverly Hills.

FAULKNER, CARL P., 87, of Inverness, died Friday (Aug. 11, 1995) at Citrus Memorial Hospital. Born in Cairo, Ill., he came here three years ago from Memphis, Tenn., and was a retired sales representative for the John Deere Tractor Co. and a Navy veteran of World War II. He was a member of Main Street Baptist Church. Survivors include his wife, Beatrice. Charles E. Davis Funeral Home, Inverness.

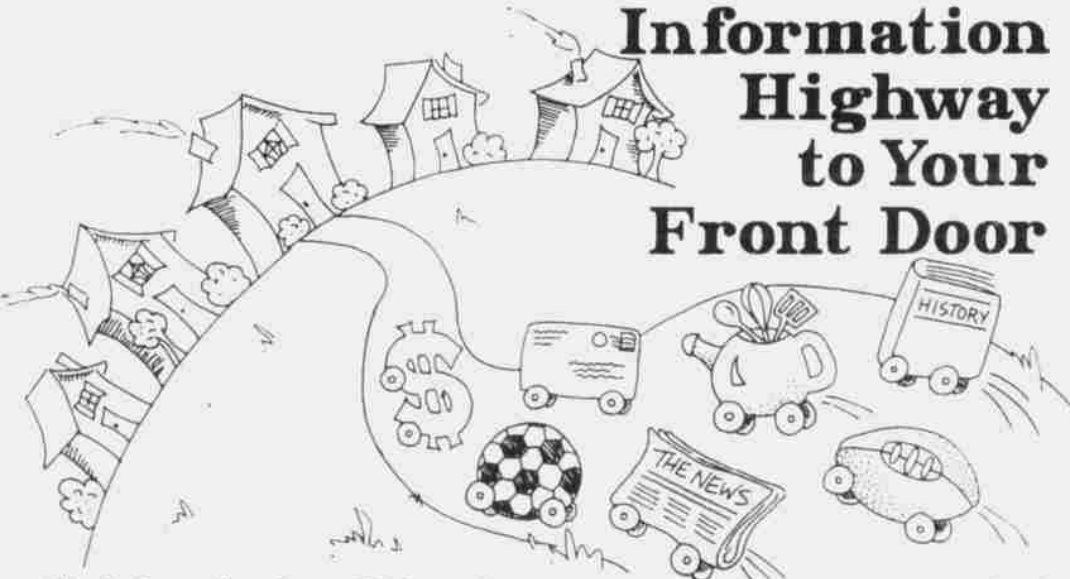
GALASSO, ANNA M., 79, of Crystal River, died Wednesday (Aug. 9, 1995) at Seven Rivers Community Hospital. Born in New York City, she came here 15 years ago from Clayton, N.J., and was a retired machine operator in the garment industry. She was a member of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, Beverly Hills, the TOPS Club, Crystal River, the Homemakers Club, Lecanto, the Beverly Hills Recreation Association and the Federation of the Blind of Citrus County. Survivors include a son, Richard, Elmwood Park, N.J.; two daughters, Joanne Lee and Lilyann Cabatbat, both of Virginia Beach, Va.; a brother, John Trovato, Bethpage, N.Y.; three sisters, Elizabeth Trovato and Dorothy Santomaso, both of Inverness, and Connie D'Angelo, Manorville, N.Y.; eight grandchildren; and several nephews and nieces. Fero Funeral Home, Beverly Hills.

MAYBERRY, THOMAS E. "BUD", 61, of Spring Hill, died Thursday (Aug. 10, 1995) at North Bay Medical Center. He came here 23 years ago from his native Lenore, W.Va., and was a retired maintenance worker. He was a member of Full Gospel Assembly Church. Survivors include his wife, Susan; six sons, Gary and Larry, both of Spring Hill, Johnny, Harlingen, Texas, and Christopher, Roy and Thomas, all of Columbus, Ohio; a daughter, Camilla Chesshir, Kokomo, Ind.; two brothers, George, Elizabeth, Ind., and Billy, Palm Harbor; six sisters, Laura Gibson, Brenda Deskins, Beatrice Shepard and Martha Walker, all of Spring Hill, June Mayberry, Brooksville, and Joyce Faircloth, Hudson; and nine grandchildren. Bell Funeral Home, Bayonet Point.

SVENS, CHARLES, 73 of Inverness, died Thursday (Aug. 10, 1995) at home. Born in Finland, he came here 10 years ago from Keene, N.H., and was a restaurant chef. Survivors include a brother, August, Finland; and two sisters, Lillie and Bernice, both of Finland. Charles E. Davis Funeral Home, Inverness.

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